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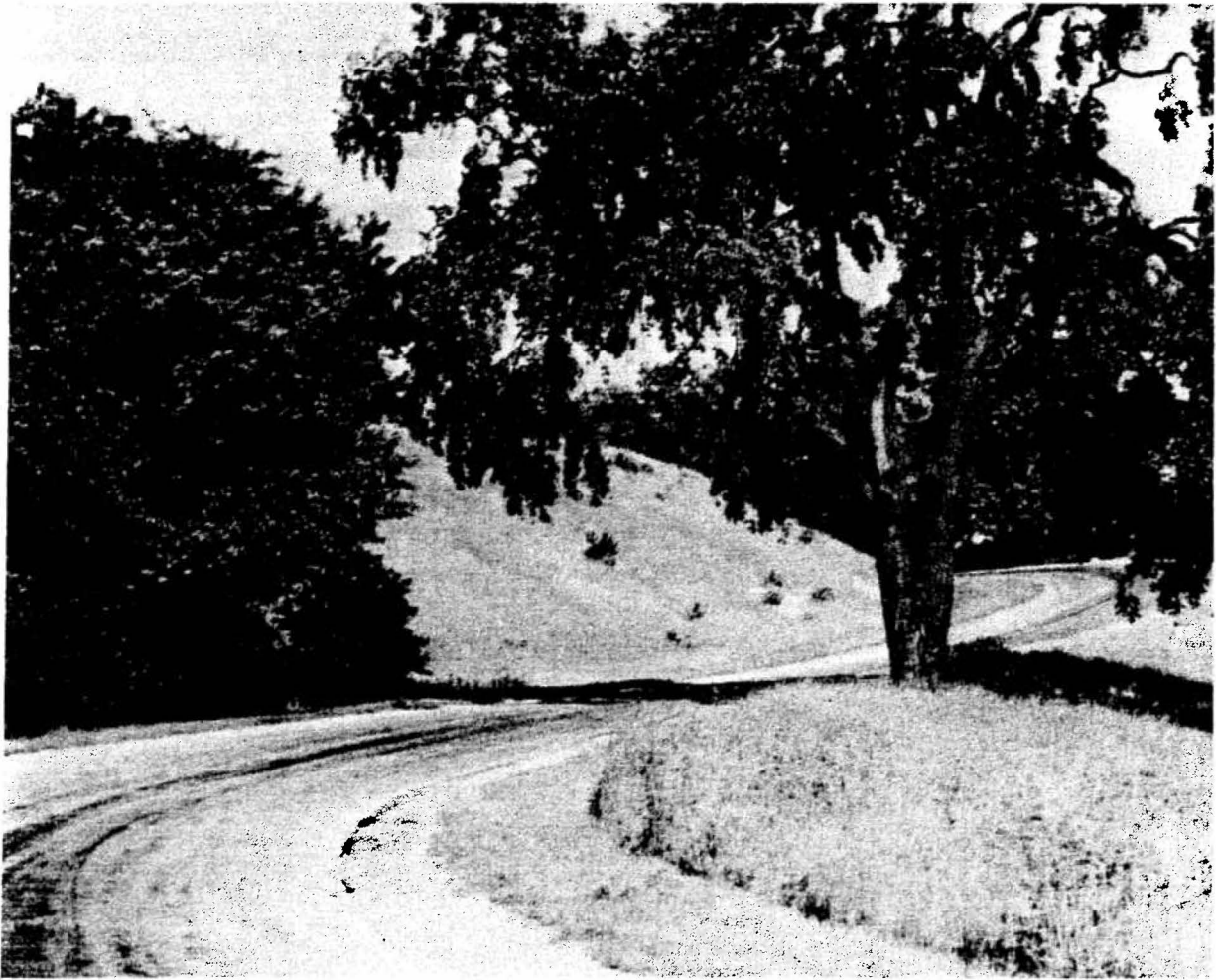
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The Road to Attainment Series

LESSON THREE

THE ROAD TO HAPPINESS

Mayan Revelation Number 295

FALSE ROADS

CONCLUSION

PRINCIPLES THAT WORK

AFFIRMATION

BELOVED PERFECTOR:

The search for happiness is universal. It is part of human nature that all of us want to be happy. Some authors make lofty claims that people are happiest in those parts of the world where they do not consciously strive for it. James Mitchener makes that claim for people of the South Seas. Yet he and others tell of the longing of the native people to visit other parts of the world, certain that happiness lies beyond the range of their experiences and possessions.

The form of the search differs with differing civilizations and customs, but the search for happiness drives people of every nationality and race.

In this Lesson we will tread the road that leads to happiness. As part of our quest we will examine some of the signboards which appear to point the straight road, but which eventuate in disillusionment and despair. The qualities that make for happiness are the object of our search. The manner in which we apply the principles to our daily lives will determine whether we can claim our share of this illusive quality that makes effective living.

Be honest with yourself as you study this Lesson. The truths that are offered here will be of no value if you tend either to disparage your good qualities or to be blind to your weaknesses. Honesty with one's self is the first essential for one who would probe the nature of happiness.

PRAYER

Gracious God, we thank Thee that Thou hast made us with a desire in our hearts for the best. Help us to grow in knowledge of Thee and of Thy Will. May the joy of Thy presence fill our lives to overflowing. Give us strength to seek the Truth that makes for happiness. In Jesus' name, Amen.



FALSE ROADS

AS we travel the road of Life we frequently encounter turns and byways that appear to be so attractive and promising that we become confident that they lead to happiness:

STRIVING FOR FAME The first of these is fame. Many of us assume that the achievement of fame will bring happiness with it. We believe that the acclaim of our friends and neighbors would satisfy our inner longings. Yet fame is fleeting, and often brings with it disillusionment. Think of the experience of Charles Lindbergh during this century. No individual has ever received greater acclaim than that which came to him when he completed the amazing flight from New York to Paris. He knew what it meant to be famous. Yet ten years later he was ridiculed and scorned because he opposed the entry of his country into a world war. Earlier, he and his wife suffered agonies in the loss of their son. Fame did not bring happiness.

You will be wise if you do not pin your hope of happiness on the praise of

man. It is entirely legitimate that you should seek public recognition for your work. Do not be too modest in avoiding the limelight but avoid the temptation to feverishly promote yourself. You may have a valuable contribution to make to the community or the world, but if the recognition is denied, you should feel regret that others have been deprived of what might have been a worthy contribution. Do not pity yourself, pity the stupidity of those who did not appreciate that which might have been worthwhile. Your happiness does not depend upon recognition by the public of the work you are trying to do.

The great spirits of history have seldom striven merely for fame. It has usually been unsought, and sometimes was unwelcome. The master passion of the eminent figures in religion and science and literature was to perform the duties to which they were called or to which they felt their best efforts must be employed.

The joy of achievement has been the source of deepest happiness for a countless host of the great people in every age. A scientist is constantly discovering new facts and information relating to his field. He knows how to spend long years in preparation and long years in investigation with no thought of public honors.

Mark Twain wrote, somewhat cynically, that "fame is a vapor, popularity is an accident, and the only earthly certainty is oblivion." Though Twain was a humorist, he was a sad individual. Whatever happiness he knew did not have its source in the fame which eventually came to him. It was found in little things, and in small events totally unrelated to his career.

Fame has its satisfactions, but it often is a
poor gateway to a happy life.

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SEEKING TO BE WEALTHY The second of the byways which appear attractive as a road to happiness is the seeking after wealth. But riches give no promise of permanency and they seldom can be used to purchase the illusive quality we call happiness. A businessman wrote these words after he retired: "Riches certainly make themselves wings. But even if permanence could be guaranteed to wealth, it utterly fails in producing happiness. In most instances a man reaches the close of his career with high blood pressure and a large stack of disquieting memories, and leaves his millions to soft-handed heirs who waste life in unearned luxuries."

A visitor to England tells of encountering a moss covered tombstone in an obscure churchyard. The words inscribed were these:

"Here lies a miser who lived for self,
And cared for nothing but gathering pelf.
Now, where he is or how he fares,
Nobody knows and nobody cares."

The same visitor later toured St. Paul's Cathedral and observed a plain statue, beneath which was the inscription: "Sacred to the memory of General Charles George Gordon, who at all times and everywhere gave his strength to the weak, his substance to the poor, his sympathy to the suffering, and his heart to God."

Avoid the temptation to strive with feverish haste to accumulate some degree

of wealth in the belief that money will bring you happiness.

Take time to observe the people who are happy and those who are unhappy. It will be evident that those with and those without material advantages are found in both groups. Salaries, dividends, comforts and pleasures are desirable and do offer a challenge that we should be worthy to receive them. But they are not a guarantee of happiness.

Not money, but the love of money, is the root of all evil. Money is the root of evil when it becomes an end in itself. Avarice is a sin which may shape our actions and thoughts as long as we live. It often thrives in mature years. Men and women often want more and more money when less of the journey of life remains. It dulls both spiritual and social insights until the world tends to revolve around the self.

If you are serious in traveling the Road to Happiness you will want to be clear about this point in the Lesson:

WEALTH HAS ITS SATISFACTIONS AND MAY SEEM TO BE THE ANSWER TO YOUR NEEDS, BUT IT OFTEN COMES TO A DEAD END. IF WEALTH IS YOUR MAJOR GOAL IN LIFE, YOU WILL DISCOVER THAT THE ROAD TO HAPPINESS HAS MOVED IN ANOTHER DIRECTION.

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STRUGGLING Pleasure is the third of the byways which many of us cultivate
AFTER PLEASURE regularly with a forlorn hope that it may lead to happiness. The current occupation with pleasure is a re-emphasis upon the early Greek Epicurean philosophy. This attitude toward life was rejected by the Greeks when the more mature teachings of Plato and Socrates were formulated. But every generation sees a new group of seekers who mistakenly believe that they can follow the path that wise men have rejected in every age.

The late George Jean Nathan gave expression to this false philosophy in these words: "To me, pleasure and my own personal happiness are all I deem worth a hoot. The happiness and welfare of mankind are not my profession; I am perfectly willing to leave them to the care of the professional missionaries of one sort or another; I have all I can do to look out for my own happiness and pleasure." It is interesting to remember that this man took his own life because he could not find anything worth struggling to achieve.

The pleasure-seeker who makes sensual satisfactions an end in themselves is doomed to unhappiness. Such a person is haunted by a vision of the good he might have achieved. His only comfort is to persuade himself that he is not totally bad.

You will have known persons who justified their actions with a lame assertion that they are not as bad as others whom they know. A man may be bankrupt in morals, with scarcely a single virtue left, but he will constantly reiterate that he is not as bad as someone else, and that there are certain evils he would not do. This attitude points to the fact that a man's inherent moral sense holds up before him the ideal of a better kind of life, and that he is unhappy because he has failed to measure up to his ideal.

When pleasure becomes an object of pursuit it is often more strenuous than doing a difficult job. Many a husband or wife cries out in despair when he or she learns of an endless series of social engagements that drain physical and emotional strength. A suburban wife told me of the shock she received when her husband interrupted his dressing one evening for a social engagement by settling wearily down into a chair. "Let's have some real fun tonight," he said, "and just stay home together."

On many occasions we indulge in a form of recreation so tiring and exhausting that we are in need of rest after our recreation. When recreation is pursued as an end in itself, it becomes a painful pursuit of pleasure. Recreation should bring relaxation and not tension. The pleasure we pursue in our leisure hours should enhance our physical, mental and moral fitness. If it fails to accomplish that purpose, then pleasure is a false way to find happiness.

You need recreation. You need a change from the driving demands of your work. The recreation you share ought to give you pleasure. It is part of life that you should enjoy your moments of leisure. But avoid the temptation to make pleasure the object of your striving. Whatever results may be observed in your life from such a false struggle, you can be certain that it will not end in happiness. If pleasure is your aim and purpose in daily living, the joyous laughter of those who are truly happy people will have passed you by.



PRINCIPLES THAT WORK

It should be clear that happiness is not a quality that we find at the end of a road. Few of us struggle and strive, and at the end say, "Now I'm happy." Happiness comes usually when we are least aware that we possess it. Later we may look back upon such moments with the sad awareness that we were then living a joyous kind of life.

Yet there are certain byways that point in the direction of a happy life. Let us examine these principles carefully:

CULTIVATE A HOPEFUL AND EXPECTANT OUTLOOK First, cultivate a hopeful and expectant outlook. We are not asked to develop a Pollyanna optimism, but the viewpoint which looks for the hopeful factors, and which searches for the light even in the blackest darkness.

Robert Loveman, the Georgia poet, caught the spirit in words of singular beauty:

"It isn't raining rain to me,
It's raining daffodils;
In every dimpled drop I see
Wild flowers on the hills.

The clouds of gray engulf the day
And overwhelm the town;
It isn't raining rain to me,
It's raining roses down."

We fail to look on the bright side when we fail to appreciate the good things we possess. Don't take the gifts and blessings of God as a matter of fact. Endeavor every day to consciously enjoy the satisfactions life offers to you. Appreciate and enjoy your friendships before the inevitable separation comes. Accept the privilege of sharing fellowship with the children in your family before they lose the precious quality of childhood.

You may have factors in your life that cause anxiety. Few of us are spared at any point in our life certain disappointments and frustrations. But see the hopeful part of the situation. Be thankful if you have good health. If your health is poor, then think gratefully of your material blessings, and of those who care for you. Think of the opportunities which, if they are seized upon, may help to bring you peace.

No one will suffer as much as you yourself do if you consistently dwell upon your hardships. Others in your circle of friends may be made uncomfortable by your despairing attitude, but the strain will be greatest upon you. Your outlook will be more hopeful, and you will be on the Road to Happiness, if you learn to think upon the factors that are hopeful.

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RADIATE HAPPINESS It is a fundamental principle that happiness becomes a most
IN ALL YOUR CONTACTS priceless possession when we radiate happiness in all our daily contacts. Christianity has properly been called the most joyous of all the religions of mankind. Jesus was a man of joy even more than he was "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." The early Christians confounded the world in which they lived. They radiated happiness. And even amid all their persecution and pain, they were happy.

Jesus made a promise to his disciples. He said, "Your joy no man taketh away from you." This is a sadly missing element in many of our lives. We are often fretful and disturbed as if there were no endless spring of joy available to us. We need to recapture this lost radiance whenever it becomes only a memory of better days.

It is our obligation to reflect the joy and radiance that is central to our faith. The agent who offers a panacea for physical ailments should at least be a fair physical specimen and free from the ills which he claims his medicine will cure. Let the implications of the faith you hold be expressed in your attitudes and in your contacts with those about you.

It is only as we radiate happiness that genuine joy comes to fill our own lives. There is a meaningful line in a current poem:

"Some people bring happiness wherever they go."

A columnist tells of following a wheelchair down the sidewalk of an Eastern city. He could not see who was the patient in the chair, but he noticed the extraordinary appearance of those who approached him. Many were taut with bitter lines on their faces until they glanced at the patient in the wheelchair. Then their faces were wreathed in smiles. He hurried forward to learn the meaning of the strange transformation. He found a small child, her body shrunken with

paralysis. But her face was radiant. He spoke to her, inquiring why she was so happy. She explained that her physicians had told her that she would be happy if she helped others to be happy. Then, with a gay smile, she said: "Am I not fortunate to be so happy?" In a voice trembling with emotion, the columnist replied: "Yes, you are fortunate."

Determine that you will use every moment to give joy to others. Be concerned that no one will sense discouragement, or fear, or despair in your words or in your attitudes. As you pour out upon others the joyous assurance that is the product of your faith, you will discover that you possess the happiness you dreamed might be yours.

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DAILY ACCEPT Accept life's satisfactions as they are available to you
LIFE'S SATISFACTIONS now. Don't spend time with regret for the past, or with
 anxiety about the future. In one of McGuffey's "Readers"
the story is told of an old clock that stood on the mantelpiece. Suddenly it
stopped. In the dialogue that followed it was found that the clock had become
discouraged after enumerating the number of times it would have to tick in a year
-- 31,566,000 seconds! When told that it would have to tick off only one second
at a time, the old clock became contented, and went about its work.

You are unable to carry the weight of all that the future may bring to you. It is part of the wisdom of God that we cannot foresee what lies ahead. "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." And sufficient unto the day is the joy thereof. It would require a strength greater than that of Atlas to crouch under the burdens of the past and the future.

As you meet today's responsibilities with a gay expectancy you will discover what it means to be contented. You may not feel a gaiety like that of a wedding day, but you will experience a quiet joy that is the forerunner of your happiness.

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FIND JOY Fourth, learn for yourself the eternal lesson that happiness is a
IN YOUR WORK product of work well done. It is a false premise to imagine that we
 must wait to find it at the end of some achievement or in a period
of relaxation. Happiness is a spirit that pervades all life as oxygen permeates
the atmosphere, or as salt spreads through the ocean.

Dr. P. Carnegie Simpson names the two essentials of happiness as some-thing to do, and someone to love. When we look closely at people within our own acquaintance whose lives are an illumination of what life really is, we find that they are people who are not idle but are busily engaged in a worthwhile work, and who are not selfish, but loving.

One of the major problems of our civilization is the man or woman whose work often becomes a mere cog in the industrial machinery, or in household affairs. You must see beyond the drudgery and the mere bread-and-butter labor to the human values that are the end result. Admit honestly to yourself that it is difficult for the soul to grow in certain kinds of work. But it is not impossible. You may

think that mining coal thousands of feet under the ground would squeeze every vestige of happiness out of the work of those who are miners. But your Instructor has heard miners singing joyfully as the elevator lowered them to the level where they were to labor. Many of them would not accept any other type of work. They feel a sense of accomplishment as they carve out the nuggets that are a source of heat for homes and industry.

If a coal miner can feel happiness in his toil, you also can find joy in the work you do. Contentment can come when we feel that our vocations, however specialized and mechanical, minister to the welfare of humanity. Unhappiness is the inevitable result of any kind of work in which one's supreme aim is the accumulation of material things rather than making a helpful contribution to the community. When we recognize that we are workers together with God, then our job is lifted up and exalted, and we feel a contentment that fills our whole being.

Your happiness depends upon your willingness to deserve the satisfactions that come from work. The time to make a start in this new outlook upon toil is now.

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LOOK TO THE MASTER
FOR
GUIDANCE AND DIRECTION

Finally, we approach the fullest happiness when we look to the Master for guidance and direction in facing the problems that life may bring. Jesus exhibited a contagious joy that has never been surpassed throughout the ages. Only twice is He said to have wept: Once at the grave of Lazarus, and again in his lament over the city of Jerusalem. These were tears of compassion, not self-pity or gloom. He found enjoyment in being with people, particularly with those people who were in need. His joy was a constant barb irritating those whose faces were hard and cruel. When He was faced with persecution, He exhorted his disciples: "Be of good cheer, for I have overcome the world."

In the beginning of his ministry He taught his disciples that happiness is a possession of the inner spirit that outside circumstances and forces cannot destroy. Happy are the poor in spirit. Happy are the mourners. Happy are those who are merciful. Happy are the pure in heart. Happy are the peacemakers. Happy are those who have been persecuted for the sake of goodness.

Jesus lived the Beatitudes before He expressed them. They were the transcript of his own inner experience. He kept himself free from fear and tension, maintaining calm strength and confidence in the face of opposition and the threats of death. He went alone to the wilderness and to the mountain, and there gained freedom from physical exhaustion and mental tension. He knew that in solitude He could gain clear vision and renewed energy. He came from such experiences with a joy that was contagious.

Jesus never lost sight of God. He lived every day with an awareness of the invisible; He steeped his soul in the assurance of the Old Testament: "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want." "Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him."

As we live in fellowship with Him, and allow his example and teachings to shape our lives, we gain something of the radiance which characterized his life.

We walk the Path that brings a happiness both genuine and lasting.



CONCLUSION

YOU were made to be happy. God's purposes for you do not include weakness and anxiety in the presence of the problems of daily living. But the achievement of the high goal is dependent upon your attitudes.

The Road to Happiness is clearly marked. Avoid the byways that lead to disillusionment. Follow the road that points in the direction of inner joy. You will not need to wait in order to reap the rewards of your efforts. You will be happy, even as you travel the Road.



AFFIRMATION

I will begin this day the journey that promises a happy life. With Divine Guidance, I will:

- * Cultivate a hopeful and expectant outlook
- * Radiate happiness in all my contacts
- * Accept life's satisfactions as God's gifts
- * Find joy in my daily work
- * Look to the Master for guidance and direction

Blessings,

Your Instructor.